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Letter dated 28 March 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention the Bucharest Conference 2002 "The Spring of New Allies" Declaration (see annex), issued on 26 March by the Prime Ministers of Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Alexandru **Niculescu**
Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 28 March 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Bucharest Conference 2002: "The Spring of New Allies"

Declaration of the Prime Ministers of Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia (25 and 26 March 2002)

We, the Prime Ministers of 10 new democracies of Europe, have come to Bucharest to rededicate ourselves to the realization of a free, undivided and secure Europe based on shared values and joined by the fundamental principles of democracy, free market economy, and respect for human rights. This vision will not be complete unless and until the nations represented here today achieve the goal of full membership in both NATO and the European Union as part of the process of expanding peace and stability throughout the Euro-Atlantic community.

Since 19 May 2000, we have gathered in Vilnius, Bratislava, Tallinn, Bled, Sofia, Skopje and today in Bucharest to join our efforts in pursuit of this common goal — the completion of a Europe whole and free. We have come together, drawing the lesson from our own history that we can achieve our common goals only if we cooperate with one other. We are committed to overcoming past historical differences in the eastern half of the continent in the same way the other democracies of Europe accomplished this purpose in Western Europe after the Second World War. The Vilnius Group has become an engine of regional cooperation and integration. From the Baltic to the Black Sea, we have set for ourselves the goal of acting in solidarity and as de facto allies — towards each other and towards those Western institutions that we aspire to join.

We look forward to the summit in Prague later this year with great hope and anticipation. This historic summit offers a unique opportunity to launch an ambitious round of NATO enlargement. Today, we reassert our determination to make as much progress in our preparations as possible so that we can be invited as qualified candidates at Prague. We are convinced that the accession of each of the countries represented here will strengthen the foundation of NATO and its capability to meet the new challenges ahead.

At a time when the world is haunted by the spectre of terrorism, it is paramount that Europe remain stable and peaceful. We consider the European Union and NATO to be as important as ever, and in many ways more so. The attacks of 11 September were an assault not just on the United States but also on civilization and the values we cherish. And it is through the European Union and NATO that we want to act individually and collectively in solidarity with the United States. At its last summit in Washington in 1999, NATO made the pledge that it would be as effective in dealing with the threats of the future as it was in dealing with the threats of the cold war. Today, we reaffirm the commitment we made last fall in Sofia to join the coalition against terrorism and to conduct our foreign and defence policies as de facto allies. Our peacekeepers stand alongside those of our allies in South-Eastern Europe and in Afghanistan. Our actions are motivated by the realization that these are the right decisions for any freedom-loving nation.

The global war on terrorism has not only spurred us to complete the job of building a Europe whole and free, but it has also underscored the urgent need to consolidate stability in South-Eastern Europe. The democracies of the Vilnius Group have a unique historical understanding of instability, extremism and criminal incursion and believe that our experience enables us to make a valuable contribution to the future security of Europe. South-Eastern Europe, more than any other region of Europe, holds the key to countering the new threats to Euro-Atlantic security and the hope for a more peaceful and secure future. Therefore, we believe that there must be a Southern dimension to the decision at the Prague summit on enlargement and a commitment, joining NATO, the European Union and the Vilnius democracies, to the reconstruction and integration of the Balkan countries. In this regard, we applaud the statement issued in Istanbul on 13 February 2002 by the Foreign Ministers of Turkey, Greece, Romania and Bulgaria. This statement is an important step in the project of South-Eastern Europe and enjoys the full support of our democracies.

We welcome and support the positive developments in cooperation between Russia and NATO in the wake of the 11 September terrorist attacks. We are committed to doing our part to accelerate the integration of a democratic Russia into the Euro-Atlantic community. The more firmly anchored our countries are in the European Union and NATO, the more we will be able to reach out to build our own bridges to Moscow. Our goal must be to create a set of relationships where the United States, Europe and Russia can all act together to meet the common challenges and threats our societies face in the twenty-first century.

Today we welcome the participation of the President of Poland, Aleksandr Kwasniewski, the Prime Ministers of the Czech Republic and Turkey, as well as Ministers and high-level representatives of other NATO allies. Their presence here is living proof that we are already working together in practice as we will in the near future as allies. Their presence confirms the common objectives of all Euro-Atlantic democracies; we share the same strategic goal of a peaceful and undivided Europe.

We will meet in Riga in July to review our final preparations prior to the November NATO summit. The Vilnius Group has committed itself to the further acceleration of reform in the firm belief that the work we undertake this year will become the foundation for an enduring peace in Europe.